

Shawn McBurney, Co-Chair
American Hotel &
Lodging Association

May 5, 2010

Laurie Flanagan, Co-Chair
American Nursery &
Landscape Association
Professional Landcare
Network

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Executive Committee:

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

American Horse Council

American Moving & Storage
Association

American Rental Association

Asian American Hotel
Owners Association

Associated Builders and
Contractors

Associated General
Contractors of America

Essential Worker
Immigration Coalition

Federation of Employers
and
Workers of America

Golf Course
Superintendents Association
of America

Interlocking Concrete
Pavement Institute

International Association of
Amusement Parks and
Attractions

International Association of
Fairs and Expositions

International Franchise
Association

National Association of
Realtors

National Club Association

National Fisheries Institute

National Restaurant
Association

National Roofing
Contractors Association

National Ski Areas
Association

National Thoroughbred
Racing Association

Outdoor Amusement
Business Association

Tree Care Industry
Association

U.S. Apple Association

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of seasonal employers from the lodging, landscaping, seafood, restaurant, tourism, food processing and other industries, we appreciate your recent commitment to move comprehensive immigration reform this year. As the immigration debate moves forward, we encourage you and your colleagues to be mindful of the needs of seasonal employers and their contribution to the American economy. Please include reasonable H-2B cap relief in the immigration package that Congress debates and avoid imposing additional costly and complicated new requirements on small, seasonal businesses.

The H-2B program has historically allowed seasonal businesses to supplement and support their full-time American workforce with seasonal temporary workers during their peak seasons. Only after employers have engaged in extensive efforts to recruit American workers do they turn to the H-2B program, which is an expensive and time-consuming process.

The H-2B program contains a cap, which especially in a strong economy, is far below the market demand for legal seasonal labor. Relief for this program was overwhelmingly approved twice by Congress. Unfortunately, that relief has not been renewed and businesses, American and foreign workers and their families have suffered as a result. Because of the temporary nature of these jobs, the sometimes strenuous manual labor associated with them, and geographic locations of these seasonal jobs, an H-2B returning worker exemption is needed even in times of high unemployment and is essential during times of economic growth.

Seasonal businesses need permanent access to a reliable and predictable labor source. Congressional action is essential not only for the vitality of small seasonal businesses and their American workforce, but also for growers, vehicle and equipment manufacturers, and other suppliers whose prosperity is closely linked to the economic health of seasonal industries. Continued access to temporary seasonal workers is especially important in allowing businesses to recover and grow as the economy begins to improve. The H-2B program is a key to survival for small businesses nationwide. We strongly encourage you to renew the H-2B returning worker program and to avoid the imposition of new requirements that will make the program too costly and complicated for the small businesses and their American workers whose livelihood depends on seasonal workers.

We look forward to working with you and your House and Senate colleagues in developing policies that will allow small and seasonal businesses access to needed temporary workers.

Sincerely,

H-2B Workforce Coalition